

# Roles of Public Libraries

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Libraries serve many purposes. Each purpose calls for different planning criteria. We ask for each of these purposes ...

... what is the library trying to do?

... who is the library trying to serve?

... what resources does the library need to achieve these ends?

The following are eight possible roles – with the first three being the most common:

## 1 Popular Materials Library

The library features current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages.

## 2 Preschooler's Door to Learning

The library encourages young children to develop an interest in reading and learning through services for children, and for parents and children together.

## 3 Support for informal life-long learning

The library supports individuals of all ages pursuing a sustained program of learning independent of any education provider.

## 4 Formal Education Support Centre

The library assists students of all ages in meeting educational objectives established during their formal courses of study.

## 5 Community Information Centre

The library is a clearing-house for current information on community organizations, issues and services.

## 6 Community Activities Centre

The library is a focus for community activities, meetings and services.

## 7 Business Information Centre/Reference Library

The library actively provides timely, accurate, and useful information for community residents.

## 8 Research Centre

The library assists scholars and researchers to conduct in-depth studies, investigate specific areas of knowledge, and create new knowledge.

Related to a many of above, is the additional role of library as “place”.